

23 March 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Information Services

FROM: SUBJECT: The Future of Systematic
Classification Review and the
Classification Review DivisionStatement of the Problem

1. The burden that Executive Order (E.O.) 12065 has placed upon the Agency, requiring a considerable expenditure of manpower and money in the conduct of a systematic classification review program with little resulting in document declassification, led the Agency to join with others in the Intelligence Community to seek an amendment or replacement of the Order. The new order that has been drafted proposes that each agency may conduct an internal systematic classification review program at its option. This raises two issues: (a) the extent and character of the future internal systematic classification review program that should be established in the Agency (if at all), and (b) the future mission and organization of the Classification Review Division which has been responsible for the systematic classification review program under E.O. 12065. A recommendation for approval is proposed in paragraph ____.

Background

2. The Agency was first introduced to systematic classification review by E.O. 11652, 1 June 1972, which called for the automatic declassification of all national security classified documents over 30-years old unless they are specifically certified as requiring continued protection by the head of the originating agency or its successor. In response, the Operations Directorate (DO) established a unit of three OSS officers late in 1972 to begin a review of the predecessor organization's records held at the National Archives. E.O. 11905, 19 February 1976, which dealt primarily with U.S. foreign intelligence (FI) activities, promulgated that the Director of Central Intelligence "shall establish a vigorous program to downgrade and declassify FI information as appropriate and consistent with E.O. 11652." The DO increased its effort, but following some discussion within the Agency as to whether a centralized or decentralized program was best, the Executive Advisory Group decided on 1 March 1977 that there should be a centralized systematic classification review program. The Information Systems Analysis Staff (ISAS) of the Directorate of Administration. The Records

Review Branch was established within ISAS for this purpose, and, as the program developed, evolved into the Classification Review Group and the Classification Review Division (CRD) under ISAS' successor, the Office of Information Services. E.O. 12065 was signed on 28 June 1978, to be effective 1 December 1978, which called for the systematic classification review of all permanent records 20-years old or older (except for foreign government information -- 30-years old) and stipulated that the "transition to systematic review at 20 years shall be implemented as rapidly as practicable and shall be completed no more than 10 years from the effective date of this Order." The Order established further that subsequent reviews of documents enjoying an extension of classification shall be set at no more than ten-year intervals, with extensions allowable for specific categories of documents at the discretion of the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO). Such extensions were soon established.

3. Ultimately, a table of organization of ☐ was established for CRD, with additional slots promised for Fiscal Years 1980 and 1981. The T.O. included

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STAT ☐ 1.0. Classification Officers at the GS-13 level to conduct the systematic classification review, supplemented by information control assistants and clericals, dividing them into four branches -- one for each directorate -- with a senior, experienced GS-14 officer at the head of each branch. Additionally, several contract annuitants of long experience were hired to work with the officers, while (originally) 15 independent contractors concentrated on the continuing review of the OSS material.

4. It soon became apparent that this force would be far from enough to meet the transition period target (December 1988) set by the Order. A study conducted for the General Accounting Office (GAO) in January of 1980 found that the Division, at production rates extant at that time, would require 100 additional officers at a budget cost of \$80 million to meet the target. In 1981, with production rates more than doubling without an increase in manpower, it was still apparent that the Division would meet less than 30 percent of its goal. Early in 1982, the problem was restudied, and with a better "fix" on the amount of material to be reviewed, and even with production rates having nearly tripled by then without an increase in manpower, the study projected that the program would cost a total of approximately \$16 million by December 1988, and yet would accomplish but a third of its goal. This assumed that the current, higher production rates could be sustained, and the full staffing complement ☐ would be maintained. It was further projected that, at those levels, the December 1988 transition target could not be reached until the year 2007; otherwise, an effort to meet the target would require an infusion of 55 additional reviewing officers at a cost exceeding \$19 million. However, by 1988, with the target still unmet, and

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work on the backlog thus continuing, the ten-year re-review period would commence for documents reviewed in 1978, and documents originated in the late sixties would be eligible for their initial review. By 1998, those documents marked for a 20-year re-review would be added to the pile, and so. Yet with all this effort, the January 1980 study indicated that only something on the order of six percent of the material was enjoying declassification. The 1982 study found that in roughly the six months preceding, about 30 percent of the documents were being downgraded, with only two percent being declassified.

5. Management saw the burden as being intolerable, and with the change of administration sought to join with the other members of the Intelligence Community to have the Order amended or replaced. Through this effort, a new order has been drafted that proposes that each agency may conduct an internal systematic classification review program at its option. It appears, at this writing, that the order, promulgating an optional program, will be signed.

6. Simultaneously, the review of the OSS records has continued apace, with a determined effort being made to complete the review of these holdings by the end of Fiscal Year 1982. Money has not been budgetted for continuing the review beyond that point. In the meantime, the classification review expertise residing in CRD being recognized, additional duties were assigned to it. About October of 1978, the Division assumed the responsibility for the Agency's review of documents proposed by the Department of State for inclusion in its Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series. The Division reviewed and cleared a few remaining volumes in the 1950 and 1951 series, has just recently cleared the last volume of ~~of~~ the 1952-54 series, and has begun to work on the first several volumes of the proposed 1955-57 collection. Further, by direction of the Director of Information Services, who serves as the representative of the Administration Directorate on the Agency's Publications Review Board, the Division has been reviewing for the Administration Directorate (with the exception of the Office of Security) the nonofficial publications and oral presentations by employees and former employees to determine whether or not these intended publications contain classified information. This responsibility also was given to CRD sometime late in 1978. Additionally, the Division has taken on miscellaneous security classification reviews such as the review of employee publications ex post facto to determine if the employee has violated his agreements by revealing classified information; of proposed publications by former high-ranking government officials (e.g., Former Secretary Kissinger); of documents in the possession of other agencies and organizations which contain information concerning intelligence matters (e.g., records retired to the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) by the Departments of State and Defense; presidential papers held at the Presidential Libraries); and of proposed

histories and other publications produced by other agencies, their employees,
or former employees (primarily the Department of Defense (DoD)).